

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE FY04 EQIP RANKING CRITERIA SOUTH CENTRAL LOCAL WORK GROUP

Ranking the Applications – Using the Worksheet

Important – Before granting points to an application for any item:

- 1) The modifier must apply to the area to be treated under the application.
- 2) The application must contain a conservation practice eligible for EQIP cost share or incentive payment, that will address each modifier for which points are being awarded.

The Local Work Group will apply a Ratio system to all applications, as follows:

- 1) One application category scored – multiply the total category score by 1.0
- 2) Two application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .55
- 3) Three application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .35
- 4) Four application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .26
- 5) Five application categories scored – multiply the total score for all categories by .23

DRY CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 176)

“Wind erosion soils are present on cropland” (33 points)

Points will be awarded if the predominant soil on the applicant's land being considered for EQIP is on the **WESL** list from *the 2-CRP (Rev. 3) WA Amend. 6 dated 12-17-99*. This is Washington Exhibit 11, **WESL Soils List**. This list contains soils that have a dominant component of a soil formed in organic or volcanic material or a soil covered with volcanic material. This material can become airborne, and has a high potential of being suspended in air during wind events, and can significantly contribute to non-attainment of PM10 air quality standards. The predominant soils are defined as soils that make up 50 acres or 1/3 of the field under consideration.

“Direct seed will be used in a system” (39 points)

The intent is to discourage use of the No-Till or Direct Seed practices in a manner that does not teach a producer how to convert into a No-Till/Direct Seed system – such as Direct Seed winter wheat only on pea ground.

“Air quality practice applied within a C factor Zone >45” (71 points)

Assign points if the contract area is located within a wind erosion climatic “C” factor zone of 45 or higher, and planned practices will reduce wind blown particulate matter.

“Sensitive Area Management” (33 points maximum)

Treating areas designated by LWG as being Air Quality problem areas due to wind blown soil particles from upwind cropland. See attached “Sensitive Area Map”

Adjacent to within ½ mile upwind of sensitive area	33 pts
Greater than 1/2 mile to 1 mile upwind of sensitive area	23 pts
From 1 mile to 1 ½ miles upwind of sensitive area	13 pts

IRRIGATED CROP APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 176)

“Irrigation induced erosion – Nomograph .5 points per ton” (6 points maximum)

Following the instructions of NRCS Tech. Note 23, assign 0.5 points for each ton/ac saved. This is the difference between the before and after scenarios.

“Improve water quantity through irrigation water management – install Data Logger” (1 point)

Install Data Logger. High technology equipment will be permanently installed in the field to provide continuous, real-time, automated soil moisture/crop moisture data. Must be part of Irrigation Water Management system.

“Improve ground water quality by reducing potential for pollutants to targeted areas by awarding points for the following conditions – depth to ground water” (1 point)

Depth to Ground Water - USDA -Soil Survey lists the soil water table depth to be less than 6 feet on the treated acres. Or log from existing well that is within 1000 feet of the proposed project and indicates a static water level less than 60 feet. (see web page: <http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/welllog>)

“Surface Irrigation will be converted to a more efficient system” (163 points maximum)

Surface irrigation is the distribution of irrigation water by surface means such as furrows, borders, contour levees, or contour ditches. Grant points if the application includes conservation practices that directly improve irrigation efficiencies on land that is currently under surface irrigation. This includes the use of gated pipe, PAM, sprinkler, and trickle systems. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview. The LWG has assigned points based on the proposed system change:

Surface to Trickle	163 pts
Surface to Pivot + IWM	162 pts
Surface to Hand/Wheel + IWM	161 pts
Buried pipe / gated pipe w / PAM + IWM	0 pts
PAM with IWM	0 pts

“Improve water quality and quantity by improving efficiency of water delivery system” (5 points maximum)

5 points if converting from open ditch to a PVC pipeline, 3 points if converting from a concrete lined delivery ditch, or leaking concrete mainline, or leaking wood stave pipe to a PVC pipeline. No points if delivery system remains the same.

GRAZING LAND APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 176)

“Prescribed grazing will be applied” (55 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply prescribed grazing on the proposed contract acres. The definition of prescribed grazing is the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals managed with the intent to achieve a specified objective. The purposes are: to improve or maintain the health & vigor of the desired plant community; maintain or improve water quality and quantity, reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition; and improve or maintain animal health and productivity. It includes developing a grazing schedule for the operating unit to document expected quantity and quality of forage for each pasture; number of livestock by kinds and class, and periods of grazing, resting and other treatment for each management unit.

“Practices will be applied to benefit Range Management” (33 points)

Applies to practices that will benefit grazing distribution, rehabilitation of declining grasslands.

“There is an excessive invasion of weeds or woody vegetation” (27 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that there are adverse impacts to plant production, condition, and quality goals as a result of invasive weeds or woody vegetation. Evaluation may be based on aerial photography and applicant interview.

“Water Development is a factor for proper grazing distribution” (28 points)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that lack of adequate water quantity or availability are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.

“Heavy use areas need stabilization” (33 points)

Grant points if there is a need to stabilize small areas of short-term livestock containment to improve water quality and/or quantity. Evaluation may be based on soil interpretations, case file information, and applicant interview. The conservation practice “Heavy Use Area Protection” will be included in the application.

FOREST LAND APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points = 176)

“Habitat improvement of more than 10 acres or ¼ mile of fish stream passage” (11 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to create, restore, or enhance greater than 10 acres of upland habitat or more than 600 feet of fish stream (at least one side of a stream if ownership boundaries lie along the stream channel). The purposes are to: (1) provide a variety of food, cover types, and water for upland habitat; or (2) provide a source of detritus, large woody debris, suitable habitat, channel morphology, and riparian characteristics important to desired aquatic species and wildlife along fish bearing streams. Tools used to determine whether there will be a benefit that meets NRCS Quality Criteria include Washington State NRCS Technical Note 14 Wildlife Habitat Suitability Guide and/or the Stream Visual Assessment Protocol; National Water and Climate Center Technical Note 99-1

“Forest access roads deliver sediment to salmonid-bearing streams” (43 points maximum)

Grant points if there is sufficient indication that forest (private, non-industrial) access roads are delivering sediment directly or indirectly to salmonid-bearing streams. Evaluation may be based on the applicant’s Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plan, aerial photography, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) definition for stream Types 1, 2, or 3 shall be the basis for determining if the stream is salmonid-bearing. Use either DNR Typing Maps or fish presence maps developed locally through the Limiting Factors

Analysis. LWG has assigned points based on proximity:

Road adjacent to or crossing stream	43 pts
Road within 1/8 mile of stream	43 pts
Road within ¼ mile of stream	30 pts
Road within ½ mile of stream	30 pts
Road more than ½ mile of stream	30 pts

“Forest stand improvement will be applied” (28 points)

Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply forest stand improvement on the proposed contract acres. The definition of forest stand improvement is to manipulate species composition and stocking by cutting or killing selected trees and understory vegetation. The purposes are: to improve understory forage production, aesthetics, wildlife & fish habitat, recreation, hydrologic conditions; to improve or sustain timber production; to initiate forest stand regeneration; or a combination of purposes. Documentation for this practice includes: the extent and size of the treatment area; spacing, density and numbers of preferred species and understory species; stocking rates in terms of basal area, spacing or trees per acre by species and size class distribution; and the method, felling direction and timing of tree cutting.

“Forest diseases, pests, or overstocking problems exist and will be treated” (62 points)

Grant points if forest diseases or pests exist or if overstocking of the site is causing a decline in forest health on Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF). Evaluation may be based on case file information, applicant interview or information from cooperating consulting foresters or DNR.

“Improve forested habitat conditions with a priority for the sites with the highest potential for wood production by: Aforestation” (32 points maximum)

Former forest land currently used for non-forest activities will be planted to adapted forest tree and shrub species. Use precipitation map located in local e-FOTG.

> 35 inches precipitation	32 pts
18-35 inches precipitation	30 pts
< 18 inches precipitation	0 pts

LIVESTOCK APPLICATION CATEGORY (Maximum points =176)

“Storage is needed for animal manure” (84 points)

Grant points if a waste storage facility is needed and included in the application. Evaluation may be based on applicant interview, livestock numbers, and current storage capability.

“Relocation of feeding facilities” (60 points)

Grant points if project includes relocation of feeding facilities.

“Improving air quality and water quality with animal waste application by soil injection” (20 points)

Grant full points if implementing a manure injection system for odor control, where feasible as part of the CNMP.

“Improve water quality, soil quality with practices that address the Phosphorus Index” (3 points maximum)

Phosphorus Index Worksheet for Eastern WA.

Phosphorus Index: High 3 pts

Phosphorus Index: Moderate 2 pts

Phosphorus Index: Low 1 pt

“Improve water quality by improving a manure waste transfer system” (9 points maximum)

If waste transfer is needed to implement CNMP then grant 8 points. Or, grant 2 points if transfer is needed from storage to additional liquid application acres not currently in the CNMP.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (Maximum points = 120)

“A buffer practice will be installed” (45 points)

Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview. The LWG has assigned points based on the buffer type:

Riparian Forest Buffer 45 pts

Contour Grass Strips 45 pts

Grass Buffer Strips 45 pts

Shelterbelt 45 pts

Field Windbreak 45 pts

Hedgerow Planting 45 pts

Grassed Waterway 45 pts

Field Borders 45 pts

Filter Strip 45 pts

“Multiple application and prior contracts on the same land” (0 or 55 points)

All individuals receive 55 points for their first application. For individuals with more than one application, 55 points are awarded to the individual’s highest scored application, and zero points are awarded to second and subsequent applications for any given application review period. Award zero points for an individual whose application is for land that has previously been under an EQIP contract

“Practice addresses one of the following: fish barriers or screens on permitted water use” (20 points)

A practice will be applied that addresses one of the following: Grant full points if man-caused fish barriers exist or if screens are needed on diversion sites with a permitted water use.